2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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but was done because the chief likes Tongan songs. Between rounds of kava ceremonial presentations were made to the chief. These were two large pieces of Tongan tapa (called *i vaka mamatha*), two canoes, four turtles, and two large mats. Six kava bowls, to be sent by the chief from the Kambara people to the council of chiefs, were prepared for shipping. Meanwhile a *meke* was danced for the chief's wife by two groups of girls, representing the west and east sides of the island. At the end of the *meke*, the dancers removed their tapa attire and presented it to the chief's wife. This was called the *luvaluva ni meke*. The chief's wife made a return gift of money. Later another whale's tooth was presented by the assistant *mbuli* of Kambara and then a small feast (*i sirovi*) was presented. It consisted of a large fish, fish soup, and sweet potatoes.

Life Crises Ceremonies[4]

PREGNANCY

Childbearing is an important social function for both parents. Through childbearing a woman can most successfully increase her social prestige, and women say that the happiest day of their lives is the birthday of their first child. It makes no difference to them whether the child is a boy or a girl. The first-born is the living representative of the ancestor gods and the temporary repository of the clan mana. The attention of the clan is concentrated on him. His conception and birth are marked by elaborate ceremonies, only partially repeated for subsequent offspring.

Conception is known in Lau to be the result of sexual intercourse, but the general opinion is that conception does not occur unless a couple copulates repeatedly. It is believed that a woman who has intercourse with many men will not become pregnant.

On Mothe, the beginning of a woman's first pregnancy is marked by a ceremony called *i vaka votu ni ngone* or *vaka votu*. The female members of the pregnant woman's clan gather together and her mother paints her entire body with a yellow powder (*rerenga*) made of the mangrove root, which is grated, mixed with water, strained, allowed to settle, drained and dried. This is called *poroporo*. The natives do not know why this is done but say it is an old custom. Four days later the women go fishing in the sea and the yellow powder is washed off. Then a feast for both men and women relatives is held.

During the first one hundred days of pregnancy a woman is a source of danger to the community, a state called *taiwaiwai*, and must observe certain tabus. For instance, she must not go fishing lest the fish break the nets; she must not touch or even look at a turtle net lest no catch be made; she may not touch the food of a sick person lest he grow worse; nor may she bathe in the sea. A small communal fishing catch is usually attributed to the presence

[4] For the development of the child and his induction into group life, see 23, pp. 26-59.

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circumcision, ordeals, dancing, license, and distribution of wealth. In 1884 the Nanga ceremonies were no longer performed.

Moto's is the only known evidence of the occurrence of the Nanga outside the area mapped by Fison. No stone enclosures such as those described by Fison were found in Lau. (For further information concerning the Nanga see Brewster, 1, pp. 93-95.)

Luve ni Wai

The Luve ni Wai (Offspring of the Water) is a secret cult found in many parts of Fiji. (See Brewster, 1, pp. 89, 222-225; Williams, *27*, vol. 1, pp. 237-239.) It is one medium by which individuals, disgruntled at the new social order, can gain social prestige in the community. The colonial government has attempted to suppress the cult, hence the natives usually deny knowledge of it. One form of the cult is practiced today in southern Lau. A few informants gave the following account of it.

> The cult consists of a few young men, each of whom has demonstrated his ability to procure and hold a personal guardian god who supplies him with mana. The mana is expressed in the form of a special gift, such as the ability to create new dance forms or medicines, to predict the future, interpret the past, or discover new members for the cult. The guardian gods called *luve ni wai* are usually the ghosts of departed ancestors, not spirits, and are today called "devils."

Some informants say they dwell in and near the water, others say they live on land, in water, stars, sky, in fish and trees. Ndengei, Tutumatua, Ndauthina, Ndakuwangga, Rayawa, and Vuthurongayau are important *luve ni wai*.

The following tale is told about Ndakuwangga, the shark god, who became a *luve ni wai*:

> Ndaunisai was the father of Wangganouanoua, who came with Ndaunisai from Viti Levu to Kambara. Wangganouanoua went to Mbenau Island at Taveuni. When the people of the island were hauling a canoe from the shore to the water, Wangganouanoua hid in a hollow tree trunk because he wanted to show the people he was a god. While the god was in the tree trunk, it was used as a roller for the canoe. When Wangganouanoua went aboard the canoe and told the men he had been inside the hollow trunk, they called him Ndakuwangga. He entered a shark. The people began to pray to this god of the shark and called it *luve ni wai* because it was from the water. Since then the shark had been tabu to the Taveuni people. The Kambara people do not eat the shark because the father of this *luve ni wai* came to Kambara.

According to informants, Luve ni Wai rites are carried on secretly in the bush at night. The leader and the members of the cult oil their bodies and dress in ceremonial tapa and wreaths. They take kava to the bush, sit in a kava circle, and prepare the drink ceremonially. The first cup is poured on the ground as an offering to the gods. The leader drinks first. The men call the gods by means of prayers. When the gods come, each enters and possesses his votary. While possessed, the men are insensitive to physical pain. They

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tions throughout the native culture. It led to the development of other outlets for the acquisition of prestige, such as the distribution of wealth and the emphasis on craftsmanship. However, part of the tremendous energy formerly devoted to this most vital group activity was suppressed and as a result native life was devitalized.

The effect of Christianity upon the native spiritual world has been profound. Lowering the old ancestor gods to the status of devils, and raising the Christian Deity to omnipotence has caused a deep conflict of loyalties in the minds of the natives. Even today they feel guilty because they are neglecting their old gods, and they say this neglect is responsible for their present lack of vitality which they characterize as an absence of "mana". Although a few courageous individuals still propitiate their ancestors secretly in the bush, the old religion has been effectively suppressed. Moreover, most of the Fijian mythology, theology, and folklore has been lost.

In spite of the apparent success of the mission, its spiritual message failed to a considerable extent to reach the natives because they were totally unprepared by their outlook on life to comprehend it. Gradually, as the Lauans have adapted western ideas to their own, Christian ceremonial has mingled with native rites. The gospel taught by the missionaries has tended to become a formality marked by a feast every seventh day and important mainly for its social value. The new religion has become a channel for acquiring social prestige. To be a good Christian today gives an individual standing in the community and a native missionary wields considerable power.

Malamala, the native missionary on Kambara, is a native of a noble clan of Tanggu. On account of his office, however, he does not live in Tanggu, but has moved into a large house opposite the mission church in Tokalau. His sacerdotal office and his rank in the upper class make him one of the leading elders of the island, and he is careful to assume great dignity